# Audience Breakdown

An audience is made up of people who have distinct values, beliefs, backgrounds, and needs. Writers adapt their message to an intended audience's emotions and values in order to achieve their purpose for writing or speaking.
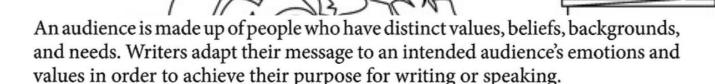
The interplay between a writer and reader is complex. Each comes to the rhetorical situation with a set of **values**, **beliefs**, and **needs**. These qualities vary from person to person, although people with similar **backgrounds** may share some commonalities in their values, beliefs, and needs. The chart below shows what a writer or speaker needs to consider when trying to reach an audience.

| Term | Definition | Example | Questions to Ask |
|---|---|---|---|
| **values** | priorities, principles held in high regard | education, freedom, inclusivity, personal rights | What ideals does the audience hold dear? What is their highest priority? |
| **beliefs** | morals, standards, codes of conduct, religious beliefs | ideas in religious texts such as the Koran, Torah, and Bible; ideas in the Constitution; personal codes of belief | What convictions do they live by? What beliefs motivate their thinking about right and wrong? |
| **needs** | requirements for life and well-being | food, shelter, clothing, safety, human connection | What does the audience need for safety and fulfillment? |
| **background** | total of one's experiences, knowledge, education, and family life | economic status, first language, highest level of education completed, home culture, gender, race, ethnicity | How similar are the backgrounds and experiences of the audience? What advantages or disadvantages do they face? |

## Text Message Screen 1 — Mom

**Mom:** hope the game was fun. when will you be home?

**You:** I'm going over Izzys house now - her mom will be there - be home about 11, ok?

**Mom:** should b fine - you with Izzy now?

**You:** Yes

**Mom:** ok tell her mom i said hi

**You:** k

**Mom:** thx - love you

**Mom:** be safe

Message    Send

## Text Message Screen 2 — Izzy

**Izzy:** U coming here after game

**You:** yes!

**Izzy:** moms partying here w her friends

**Izzy:** Julio nboys coming over - he ask bout you

**You:** OMG

**You:** U com get me RIGHT NOW?

**Izzy:** on my way

**You:** omgomgomg

Message    Send

| Evidence from Text Message | Rhetorical Choices | What the Writer Believes about the Mom's Background, Values, Beliefs, Needs |
|---|---|---|
| I'm going over to Izzys house now—<u>her mom will be there</u>. . . <br><br>Student does not mention <u>Izzy's "moms partying here w her friends"</u> | The student confirms the presence of an authority figure and omits questionable information. | Her mother values her daughter's safety, so the daughter chooses to state that Izzy's mom will be there. <br> Mentioning the possibly lax supervision might mean the daughter would not be allowed to go to Izzy's. |
| . . .-be home <u>about 11</u>. . .<u>ok</u>? | The student offers a reasonable time frame or suggests a curfew and seeks her mom's approval. | Her mother values her daughter's safety and obedience. |
| [in response to "tell her mom i said hi"] <br><br> - <u>k</u> | The student agrees to her mother's request. | Her mother values her daughter's responsibility and trust. |